
Name of Organization: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Type of Organization: State

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Project Title: Improving Land Use Decisions Along the Niagara Escarpment

Project Category: Habitat (Ecological) Protection and Rest

Rank by Organization (if applicable): 3

Total Funding Requested (\$): 185,000 **Project Duration:** 2 Years

Abstract:

The Niagara Escarpment Group (NEGroup) was formed to promote balanced land use decisions and promote appreciation of the ecology of the Niagara Escarpment by using education, local interests, scientific knowledge and sound planning concepts that produce tools to help decision makers make wise land use decisions that conserve the resources of the Niagara Escarpment. Through this project, the NEGroup will address land use issues threatening this unique land feature as well as addressing water quality issues associated with it. Building on the work conducted by Bay Lakes Regional Planning Commission and the work of the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Program in the Bureau of Endangered Resources, we will identify pristine and unique areas that need special protection. To protect these areas, NEGroup will develop and host training workshops targeted at county and town decision makers. The workshops will provide the information, education and tools to enhance and protect this unique resource.

The greatest needs of the NEGroup are: 1) Improve our knowledge of the special resources associated with this land feature through an ecological inventory and GIS maps, 2) Develop a clear and inclusive working definition of the Niagara Escarpment, 3) Identify Critical Resource Areas that need protection, and 4) Coordinate work with all interest groups and partners conducting research, mapping and training workshops.

Geographic Areas Affected by the Project

States:

<input type="checkbox"/> Illinois	<input type="checkbox"/> New York
<input type="checkbox"/> Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania
<input type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin
<input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota	<input type="checkbox"/> Ohio

Lakes:

<input type="checkbox"/> Superior	<input type="checkbox"/> Erie
<input type="checkbox"/> Huron	<input type="checkbox"/> Ontario
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/> All Lakes

Geographic Initiatives:

<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Chicago	<input type="checkbox"/> NE Ohio	<input type="checkbox"/> NW Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/> SE Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/> Lake St. Clair
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Primary Affected Area of Concern: Fox River/Green Bay, WI

Other Affected Areas of Concern: Lake Michigan
Lake Winnebago

For Habitat Projects Only:

Primary Affected Biodiversity Investment Area: Door County Peninsula

Other Affected Biodiversity Investment Areas: Niagara Escarpment - Door Co., Kewaunee Co., Brown Co., Calumet Co., Fond du Lac Co., Dodge Co.

Problem Statement:

The Niagara Escarpment occurs in the eastern portion of Wisconsin and falls within the Lake Michigan watershed. Because of the uniqueness of this land feature it is attracting a number of uses that are threatening its' biological diversity. Some of the uses include: condominium, residential and commercial development along both the base and the top of the escarpment, removal of vegetation to improve viewsheds, development of quarries and gravel pits, construction of wind turbines for electricity generation, cellular tower siting, channelization of waterways draining through the escarpment, numerous archeological sites of the escarpment being disturbed by development, unique wildlife habitats and species being disturbed by extensive development pressures along the escarpment. The Fish & Wildlife Service and the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay have identified several species of snails along a small portion of the escarpment which are either endangered or have previously only been observed in fossil records. In another area to the south, a stand of cedars have been identified as some of the oldest trees in North America. Many of the towns and counties that control the land use decisions affecting the escarpment have very little or no knowledge of the ecological or cultural importance of this land feature. Training is needed to provide these decision makers with information and tools to protect the integrity of the Niagara Escarpment while still meeting the growth needs of their areas.

Proposed Work Outcome:

The goals for this project are to :

- 1) Continue the biological inventory work and GIS Mapping (funded through a 1998 GLNPO grant) efforts to include Ecological Orientation and the Identification of Natural Communities, Rare Plants and Animals for the remaining portions of the Escarpment.
- 2) Develop a clear and inclusive working definition of the Niagara Escarpment.
- 3) Identify Critical Resource Areas that need protection.
- 4) Coordinate work with all interest groups and partners on research and mapping efforts and develop / implement the training workshops.

Project Milestones:**Dates:**

Project Start	10/2000
Contract coordination/training services	10/2000
Continue Ecological Inventories	05/2001
Begin workshops in Door/ Kewaunee County	01/2001
Preliminary inventory report	01/2002
Wrap up inventory work	05/2002
Final Report and Maps	09/2002
Project End	09/2002

☐ Project Addresses Environmental Justice

If So, Description of How:

☒ Project Addresses Education/Outreach

If So, Description of How:

The major focus of this effort is to provide information, maps and tools to local land use decision makers for protection of the Niagara Escarpment. Many of the towns and counties containing this land feature are either in the process or have recently completed land use plans. Much of the information needed to convince decision makers that the escarpment is important and needs protection does not exist. Once convinced, these local units of government do not have the tools necessary to provide adequate protection for sensitive and critical areas of interest. The training workshops will provide these decision makers with both the information and the tools that they will need to better protect the Niagara Escarpment. The materials developed through the support of this grant will be used in all 6 counties and will have application for other ecologically sensitive areas in need of protection through land use planning and implementation.

Project Budget:

	Federal Share Requested (\$)	Applicant's Share (\$)
Personnel:	0	28,640
Fringe:	0	0
Travel:	5,000	1,000
Equipment:	0	0
Supplies:	6,000	1,000
Contracts:	174,000	0
Construction:	0	0
Other:	0	0
Total Direct Costs:	185,000	30,640
Indirect Costs:	0	0
Total:	185,000	30,640
Projected Income:	0	0

Funding by Other Organizations (Names, Amounts, Description of Commitments):

East Central Regional Planning Commission

\$22,500 and 80 planning staff days

To assist in coordinating a multi-region effort for the Niagara Escarpment. Work elements include developing an information database, spearheading a conference in 1999, and developing a tourism-recreation brochure.

Description of Collaboration/Community Based Support:

The groups that have been active in the NEGroup include Oakfield Ledge Preservation Organization, East Central Regional Planning Commission, Bay Lakes Regional Planning Commission, University of Wisconsin Extension from Kewaunee, Winnebago, Door and Calumet counties, Dodge County Planning and Development, Oneida Nation, Fond du Lac County Planning Department, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, Door County, Calumet County Planning, The Nature Conservancy, University of Wisconsin - Green Bay, US Fish & Wildlife Service, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Past efforts that support this project include work being done by The Nature Conservancy in Door County regarding coastal areas and the endangered snail communities, a 1998 Niagara Escarpment Conference that raised awareness within the local communities, a 1998 GLNPO grant to Bay Lakes Regional Planning Commission to map land use along the Niagara Escarpment and a biological inventory conducted by the Bureau of Endangered Species in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.